

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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R 181530Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8279

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 0308

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, CT

SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH EMPEROR BOKASSA

1. SUMMARY: HAVING BEEN INFORMED THAT I WOULD SHORTLY BE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATIONS, EMPEROR BOKASSA SUMMONED ME FEBRUARY 16 TO HIS COUNTRY HOUSE AT BOBANGUI (THE IMPERIAL COURT AT BERENGO) FOR A GENERAL TOUR D'HORIZON OF THE STATE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. OVER AN AFTERNOON APERITIF AND IN AN ATMOSPHERE BOTH RELAXED AND FRIENDLY, BOKASSA SPELLED OUT HIS DESIRE FOR CONTINUED CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. FOREIGN MINISTER MOKODOPO AND IMPERIAL COURT MINISTER FRANCK WERE IN ATTENDANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE OPENING OF OUR TOUR D'HORIZON EMPEROR BOKASSA LAUNCHED INTO AN EXTENDED SOLILOQUY ON THE CURRENT STATE OF AFRICA. HE DEPLORED RISING SOVIET INFLUENCE, THE CUBAN OCCUPATION OF ANGOLA, AND THE GENERALLY RADICAL TREND OF EVENTS. HE PROFESSED HIMSELF TO BE FIRMLY AND IRREVOCABLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ANTI-SOVIET. THE CAE AND ZAIRE HE SAID WERE THE ONLY STATES IN THE REGION WHICH WERE

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WILLING TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT THIS THREAT. THE SOVIETS POSED A DIRECT THREAT TO HIS GOVERNMENT, AND IF THEY WERE TO SUCCEED IN REMOVING HIM FROM POWER THERE WOULD BE A SOLID BAND OF SOCIALIST STATES ACROSS THE CENTER OF AFRICA. BOKASSA WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE CONGOLESE, WHOM HE ALLEGED WERE DOMINATED BY MOSCOW. HE WAS INCENSED THAT NGOUABI HAD "STOLEN" SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF PETROLEUM DESTINED FOR THE CAE IN ORDER TO SUPPLY ANGOLA. EFFORTS TO GET THE

CONGO TO REPAY THE CAE HAD SO FAR BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL.

3. BOKASSA MADE CLEAR THAT IN HIS VIEW HIS CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR WESTERN, ESPECIALLY US INTERESTS DESERVED RECOGNITION. HE HOPED THIS WOULD COME IN TERMS OF INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, BUT HE ADDED HE WOULD WELCOME SOME LIMITED SUPPORT FOR HIS NATIONAL SECURITY NEEDS. HE SAID HIS MINISTERS WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS WITH ME IN GREATER DETAIL.

4. I RESPONDED THAT I WELCOMED HIS ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR US INTERESTS AND POSITIONS. I WOULD BE PASSING ON HIS VIEWS TO MY COLLEAGUES IN WASHINGTON ON MY RETURN, AND I WAS CONFIDENT THAT HIS SUPPORTIVE ATTITUDE WAS UNDERSTOOD AND WELCOMED. I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HIS ENCOURAGEMENT FOR OUR EFFORTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (REPORTED SEPTEL) AND FOR HIS ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE CAE. I NOTED THAT I HAD SIGNED TWO AID AGREEMENTS THAT MORNING, BRINGING TO FIVE THE NUMBER OF AGREEMENTS SIGNED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1976. LATER IN THE YEAR WE WOULD BE SIGNING A MAJOR AGREEMENT ON RURAL HEALTH IN THE OUHAM PREFECTURE, AND I WAS HOPEFUL WE COULD ALSO MOVE AHEAD ON A SUBSTANTIAL PROJECT FOCUSSED ON THE COUNTRY'S POTENTIALLY VAST MINERAL RESOURCES BY USING MODERN SATELLITE AND AEROMAGNETIC SURVEY TECHNIQUES. WITH REGARD TO SECURITY ASSISTANCE I SAID I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER ANYTHING WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN THAT AREA. I WOULD, OF COURSE, INFORM THE AUTHORITIES IN WASHINGTON OF ANY SPECIFIC REQUEST HIS GOVERNMENT WISHED TO MAKE.

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5. I ALSO NOTED MY SATISFACTION THAT THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC CONTENTIEUX BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS CONTINUED TO MOVE TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION. BOKASSA ENTHUSIASTICALLY AGREED, SAYING THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY INTERVENED TO MOVE ISSUES ALONG. AS EVIDENCE OF HIS GOODWILL HE SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING WITH DDI PRESIDENT JOLIS NEXT WEEK. (HE HAS ALSO APPARENTLY GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THAT A DOLS 175,000 PAYMENT AGAINST THE OUTSTANDING EXIM BANK LOAN INTEREST BE MADE IN MARCH)

6. ON PARTING I GAVE BOKASSA THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OF THANKS FOR BOKASSA'S INAUGURATION GREETING. (THE MESSAGE WAS CARRIED AS LEAD NEWS STORY ON NATIONAL RADIO FEB. 17.) BOKASSA EXPRESSED HIS GREAT ADMIRATION FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS PROFOUND FEELINGS OF FRIENDSHIP TO THE PRESIDENT. HE SAID HE HOPED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM AND LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING HIM. AFTER THE CORONATION, WHICH HE INDICATED WOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE END OF 1977. HE SUGGESTED A VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN THE SUMMER OF 1978. I SAID I WOULD DISCUSS HIS INTEREST IN A VISIT WHILE I WAS IN WASHINGTON.

7. COMMENT. THE OVERALL AMBIANCE OF OUR MEETING WAS EXTREMELY POSITIVE. BOKASSA WAS CONCERNED TO PLAY UP THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP AND TO STRESS HIS DESIRE FOR FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. HE OBVIOUSLY ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS. HIS PERSONALLY CONSERVATIVE ANTI-COMMUNIST VIEWS WILL NOT, HOWEVER, STAND IN HIS WAY WHEN IT COMES TO NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST POWERS, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE WILLING TO AID THE EMPIRE. NONETHELESS FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING IN THE GOVERNMENT FROM BOKASSA ON DOWN THAT THE UNITED STATES IS MAKING A SINCERE EFFORT TO HELP THE CAE AND THAT THERE ARE ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR A COLLABORATIVE AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP. THIS IS A VIEW WHICH I HAVE BEEN AT PAINS TO NURTURE.
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